

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

CLAIMS**What is claimed is:**

1. (Currently Amended) A horizontal milling-boring machine comprising:

- a monolithic horizontal bed (6) anchored to the floor (8) and separated from the work table (10).
 - a portal formed column structure (4) supported by the bed (6) and slidable therealong, said portal having two columns (16) connected together by an upper crosspiece (18)
 - a slide carriage (22) slidable vertically along the facing internal walls of said columns (16)
 - a slide (2) supporting a tool head (34) and movable axially to said carriage (22) in a direction perpendicular to the axis of said bed (6).
 - guide means (26) and drive means (28, 30, 32) being interposed between said column structure (4) and said bed (6).
- ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the two columns (16) of the portal are lowerly connected through at least a crosspiece (20) placed at a level at least partly lower than the upper surface of said bed (6).

2. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the guide means (26) consist of rails positioned on the upper surface of said bed (6).

3. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the guide means ~~(26)~~ consist of rails positioned on the lateral surfaces of said bed ~~(6)~~.

4. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the drive means consist of at least one screw and at least one threaded bush which mutually engage.

5. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in claim 4, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the drive means consist of a rack ~~(32)~~ rigid with said bed ~~(6)~~ and at least one pinion ~~(30)~~ rigid with said portal ~~(4)~~.

6. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in claim 4, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the drive means consist of a linear electric motor.

7. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in ~~one or more of claims from 4 to 6~~ claim 4, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the drive means ~~(28, 30, 32)~~ are positioned on the upper surface of said bed ~~(6)~~.

8. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in ~~one or more of claims from 4 to 6~~ claim 4, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the drive means ~~(28, 30, 32)~~ are positioned on at least one lateral surface of said bed ~~(6)~~.

9. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the two columns ~~(16)~~ of the portal formed structure ~~(4)~~ are connected together lowerly by a pair of lower crosspieces ~~(30)~~ which laterally embrace said bed ~~(6)~~.

10. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in ~~claims 8 and 9~~ claim 8, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the guide rails ~~(26)~~ are interposed between the outer lateral surfaces of said bed ~~(6)~~ and the inner lateral surfaces of said lower crosspieces ~~(20)~~.

11. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the bed ~~(6)~~ comprises a longitudinal recess ~~(36)~~ within which corresponding lower appendices ~~(40)~~ of each column ~~(16)~~ and a connecting portion thereof are slidably housed, said connecting portion being also slidably along said longitudinal recess ~~(36)~~.

12. (Currently Amended) ★ The milling-boring machine as claimed in claim 11, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the guide rails ~~(26)~~ are interposed between the internal lateral surfaces of said recess ~~(36)~~ and the facing external lateral surfaces of said appendices ~~(40)~~.